

Small Business Trends

Building Authority Through Question & Answers

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Yesterday I mentioned the new changes that had been made to [the search features on Yahoo Answers](#). The site upgrades were designed to make it easier for users and business owners to keep tabs on the most relevant discussions on the Web site. These question and answer sites have been a goldmine for small business owners over the past few years, helping them to network and grow their authority. By taking the time to answer existing questions about your niche, you help to set yourself (and your business) up as the expert in these fields. Similar to blogging, this is one way SMB owners [OnStartups Answers](#)

As the name would suggest, this question and answer site is geared toward entrepreneurs and startups. It has a healthy, active user base so new questions are constantly being added. You can find new discussions by doing a search for your topic of choice or by using the tag cloud on the right side bar. I've found the tag cloud is a great way to not only navigate the site, but to see what topics users are most interested in. It's also not required that you register to ask a question, which some users appreciate.

Jason Cohen [wrote about Answers OnStartups](#) last year for SmallBizTrends.

[Business.com Answers](#)

This is another really popular Q&A site targeted at small business owners. I did a full [review of Business Answers](#) in November and remember being really impressed with the quality of answers on the site. One neat thing about Business Answers is that their categories really do service everything under the sun. They have questions related to automotive, electronics, financial, engineering, non profits, real estate and everything in between. Checking out any of the main category pages will also show you featured questions from that segment.

[QuickSprout Answers](#)

This site is fairly young and it's a break off of Neil Patel's very successful Quicksprout business blog. The forum itself isn't populated with that many questions yet, but it's one I still keep an eye every so often. With Neil behind it, I'm confident in this site's ability to pull in some smart folks.

[LinkedIn Answers](#)

LinkedIn Answers has a huge database of question and answers for SMB owners to both benefit from and provide answers for. LinkedIn offers a great incentive for providing the best answers by placing

badges on your LinkedIn profile displaying what topics you've showed expertise in and linking to all of your answers. Because this sits on your profile, you not only establish authority with the people reading that question, you establish it with anyone who happens across your profile.

[Twitter](#)

I know, I know. You're yelling at me that Twitter isn't a Q&A site, however, it's all in how you look at it! Spend a little time on the microblogging site and you can't help but notice the number of marketers and users logging on to poll their audience, get product recommendations or get answers to their most common business problems. By answering on site or using that question as prompt to add content to your Web site, you again take advantage of social media's Q&A format. You can use your site logs the very same way.

[Coming Soon: Facebook Answers](#)

That's right, Facebook is experimenting with its own Answers service. Keep an eye on this one. With Facebook's millions of users, this could be a serious opportunity for brand exposure.

Above are some of my favorite Q&A resources on the Web for small business owners. Do you have any other favorites?

have been able to create strong personal brands and leads back to their site.

If question and answer sites are so powerful, then what sites are there *other* than Yahoo Answers that SMBs can take advantage of? Well, below you'll find a few of my favorites.